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THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE KÖNIGSMARK QUESTION

A STRIKING example of what modern historical methods and especially the tracing back to their sources of long-accepted assertions, can do towards unravelling past mysteries is furnished by some recent researches of Schaumann,¹ of Köcher² and of Horric de Beaucaire³ in the matter of the once famous intrigue between Count Philip Königsmark and Sophia Dorothea, electoral princess of Hanover. Not that all, or even nearly all has been explained ; we are as much in the dark now as to what became of the unfortunate Swede who suddenly vanished forever on the eve of the day when he was to have run away with the young wife of the future George I., as were the friends and relatives who so persistently demanded an investigation at the time. But the whole matter has been shown to have a far broader significance than was ever before imagined ; the steps that led to the catastrophe have been carefully followed one by one, and evidence has been found which throws a new light on the terrible punishment meted out to the erring princess—the common ancestress of two famous lines of kings—who for thirty years or more was kept in almost utter isolation.

Interest in the fate of this pair, Königsmark and Sophia Dorothea, has never abated from their own time to ours. At short and almost regular intervals works purporting to contain the most surprising revelations have been given to the world. The climax was reached in 1845 with the appearance of two stout volumes of memoirs which were said to have been found in the prison-house of Ahlden after the princess's death ; included in the publication was a full account of the whole tragic episode written by a lady-in-waiting, Fräulein von Knesebeck, who was known to have played an important part in the affair.

Various shorter accounts, based on these new sources, have since found their way into print ; the latest of them, entitled "The Story of an Unhappy Queen," appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1892. A single sample is worth quoting literally as an excellent

¹ *Sophie Dorothea und die Kurfürstin Sophie*, Hanover, 1879.

² *Die Prinzessin von Ahlden*, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, XLVIII. 1-44, 193-235.

³ *Une Mésalliance dans la Maison de Brunswick*, Paris, 1884. See also for this article Vols. IV., XXVI., and XXXVII. of the *Publikationen aus den Preussischen Staatsarchiven*, containing memoirs and letters of the Electress Sophia.

illustration of the kind of story that has long found credence with regard to this matter. The explanation given of Königsmark's disappearance is that the Countess of Platen, mistress of the Elector Ernest Augustus, out of jealousy for spurned affections, and by a false use of the electoral princess's name, decoyed the count into an ambush in the Hall of Knights of the castle at Hanover and watched behind a curtain while the assassins did their work.

And now like a serpent from out its hole emerged the fiend who had planned this ghastly revenge, unwilling that her quondam and worthless lover should expiate his crime and that she should not witness his agony . . . "The princess is innocent," he murmured as the ferocious woman stood quivering with hatred, rage and black revenge over his dying form ; and while he was still muttering his expiring testimony to the innocence of her for whom he suffered, she raised her foot, encased in its high, wooden-heeled shoe and, placing it on his mouth, she stamped out his last expiring breath.

This same writer, who professes to have obtained her information from an undoubted authority on the secret histories of the Hanoverian court, asserts that the vindictive husband, the man who was later George I. of England, caused the heart of his dead rival to be taken from his body and burnt, the ashes being placed in a footstool which the prince used to the end of his life and which still exists.

Thankful indeed should we be to the men who by diligent search and by means of the sharpest constructive as well as destructive criticism have at last given us a basis from which to proceed and have broken asunder a whole chain of previously accepted testimony. Schaumann and Köcher especially, the latter of whom is at present in charge of the Hanoverian state archives, have furthered our knowledge in three different ways ; they have sifted and sorted every scrap of manuscript evidence that still survives, they have entirely established the untrustworthiness of all former authorities, and they have brought the Königsmark episode itself into a clearer relationship with what went before and what came after.

That the actual amount of extant manuscript material is so slight is now known to be due to the preconcerted policy of the heads of the house of Hanover. They were determined that no written records on this matter should remain. The Electress Sophia implies this in her letters to her niece, the Duchess of Orleans, who was her chief confidante. She seldom mentions the Königsmark affair, but when she does it is, so to speak, with bated breath and with a warm injunction to destroy the letters and to let no one know that the information came from her. The Hanoverian archives themselves

bear the strongest testimony to the plan of suppression and destruction ; documents and letters for the critical months are missing from collections otherwise intact ; pages are torn out of the covers in which they once belonged. Almost all the contemporary testimony that we now have came later into the archives with the family papers of deceased persons or with the acts of legal or ecclesiastical tribunals. The most curious by far of all the bits of evidence is a series of remarks scribbled by the lady-in-waiting, Fräulein von Knesebeck, on the furniture and walls of the room at Scharzfels where, for three years after the catastrophe, she was kept in confinement for having aided and abetted the princess in her attempt at flight. Being allowed neither pen nor pencil she had made use of the charred coals with which her warming-pan was filled. She escaped at last and an attested copy was at once made of all that she had written, while at the same time an account was rendered of various utterances let fall by her during the term of her imprisonment.

Not by any means the least interesting result of the work of the Hanoverian investigators is their proof of the utter falsity of Sophia Dorothea's memoirs and of Fräulein von Knesebeck's journal. Even on the surface, indeed, the memoirs bear the stamp of improbability ; they are written in dialogue form, the characters have their exits and their entrances, and the plot is unfolded as in a regular drama. No one with the least conception of the real character of the unfortunate electoral princess, who had accepted her incarceration as a just penance for the scandal she had caused, could ever have considered her capable of this elaborate working-out of the trying incidents in which she had played so important a part. Yet the calm assurance with which the work was published and the positive manner in which false statements were made, caused the whole to be received as a serious contribution to historical literature.

The simplicity of the means by which these memoirs, as well as the journal of the lady-in-waiting, have been proved to be arrant forgeries is without a parallel in the history of criticism. Both of these writings, and indeed almost all the publications that have ever appeared on the subject of Königsmark's relations to Sophia Dorothea, are found to have been based on a novel of the period. Not only have the incidents been thus borrowed, but in many cases the actual language. Even in the attenuated form in which the narrative has been handed on by the writer in the *Nineteenth Century*, whom I have quoted above, I have been able to find traces of verbal agreement with the extracts from the original given by Köcher.

Not that the novel which has given rise to this century-long deception was by any means an ordinary one. The author, Duke Antony Ulrich of Wolfenbüttel, was the cousin of the princes of the house of Brunswick; his son had once been affianced to Sophia Dorothea but had fallen at the siege of Philipsburg in the war against Louis XIV. It was a passion with Antony Ulrich to write romances of interminable length in which incidents and personages of his own day, though clothed in classic garb, should be clearly recognizable. The *Königsmark* episode is found in full in the sixth volume of a work known as *The Roman Octavia*, which was published in 1707—some thirteen years after that July night on which the real tragedy must have taken place. Sophia Dorothea appears under the thin disguise of the Princess Solane, Fräulein von Knesebeck is Sulpitia Praetextata, while the Electress Sophia is “the incomparable queen Adonacris.” The scene is laid alternately at the courts of Polemon (George William of Celle, the father of Sophia Dorothea) and of Mithridates (the first elector of Hanover, Ernest Augustus).

While acknowledging, what is indeed indisputable, that the *Roman Octavia* has hitherto been the prime source of our information concerning the incidents with which we are dealing, certain critics have nevertheless tried to enter a plea for the general trustworthiness of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel. He was a warm friend of the house of Celle and remained intimate with its members even after the contemplated union by marriage was frustrated by his son’s death; it was to his protecting arms that the proposed flight of *Königsmark* and Sophia Dorothea is said to have been directed. Yet, as a matter of fact, he knew no more of the actual truth in this present instance than did his contemporary the Duke of St. Simon, who, writing at Paris at the time, gravely asserted that *Königsmark* had been seized by the electoral prince and thrown alive into a hot oven. Antony Ulrich’s own letters¹ prove that he was informed of nothing, while one or two statements in the *Roman Octavia* which can be accurately controlled show a total perversion of the facts and a tendency to be as hateful and malicious as possible towards the court of Hanover. What his general reputation as a romancer was is proved by a remark of the Electress Sophia, who on hearing an infamous slander against the Duchess of Celle—a statement to the effect that the lady in question, who was the daughter of a marquis, would once have been glad to marry a valet of the brother of Louis XIV.—declared at once that here was something to rejoice the heart of Antony Ulrich.

¹ Printed in the appendix of Beaucaire.

After sifting, as I have said, all the authentic sources of information and after proving that the greater part of the literature on the subject is a mere tissue of lies and imaginings, Schaumann, and, supplementing him, Köcher, went on to show that the Königsmark affair is not to be treated as an isolated episode, but that the attempted flight was the inevitable outcome of the scornful and chilling policy pursued through a long course of years by the house of Hanover towards the women of the house of Celle. I now ask leave to direct the reader's attention to the reasons for that policy, to a brief narrative, in fact, of what led up to the desperate resolve of one who might soon have been England's queen, to leave husband and children and to fly in the company of a man with an international reputation for profligacy.

In order to understand the true sequence of events it is necessary to revert to the time when Sophia of the Palatinate, the later electress of Hanover and acknowledged successor to the throne of England, was first of a marriageable age. She was daughter of that Frederick who had found the crown of Bohemia such a crown of thorns at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War—of a king, therefore, albeit a fugitive one. Her mother was the daughter of James I. of England, so that on that side, too, the proudest blood in Europe flowed in her veins. Her hand was sought in various directions and the friends of the young Charles of England, the later King Charles II., made efforts so pertinacious on his behalf that at last, wearied by their importunities and intrigues, and thoroughly disinclined to the match after the affairs of Charles I. had begun to grow desperate, Sophia left her mother's court at the Hague and took up her abode with her brother at Heidelberg. It was here that she met the attractive but dissipated Brunswick prince, George William of Celle; fresh from a struggle with his Estates, who had represented to him in the strongest terms the necessity of settling down and living among them and of ceasing to squander his revenues in foreign lands, he asked for the hand of the young princess. As the palatine elector approved of the match a formal engagement was entered into and the young duke continued on his way to the carnival of Venice. There, however, determined to take advantage of the last flitting hours of liberty, he indulged in such inordinate excesses that his health was seriously undermined and his physicians declared him unfitted for matrimony. Thoroughly grieved at the position in which he had placed his intended bride and willing to make any sacrifice in order to right the wrong that he had done, he proposed an arrangement that was accepted as satisfactory by all parties concerned.

By family compact it had been agreed that the lands of the duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg should never be divided into more

than two parts. Of these two parts at the present time George William held one and an older brother the other ; the youngest of the family, Ernest Augustus, had little to live upon and little to look forward to save the succession to the bishopric of Osnabrück, which, by the terms of the Peace of Westphalia, was to fall to him at the decease of the existing Catholic incumbent. To this brother, then, George William made the proposition that he should marry Sophia, promising to provide amply for his present needs, to pronounce him successor to all his estates and, lest an heir should be born to contest his rights, to sign a solemn engagement himself never to marry. Sophia, who cynically remarks in her memoirs that all she desired was a suitable appanage, consented to this arrangement, allowed the preparations for the wedding to be hastened forward, and, before she had been long a bride, found herself devotedly attached to the man she had married and very contented with her lot. Her letters at this time show her to have been a remarkably intelligent woman, with keen powers of observation and an inexhaustible fund of humor. The newly married pair went to live at Hanover with George William, who for their benefit built an extra wing to his palace. "It is the holy Trinity that governs here," writes Sophia to her brother in her sprightly but not always reverent style ; but the intimacy in time became inconvenient, for George William learned the worth of the prize he had rejected, and Ernest Augustus became absurdly jealous of his brother. Sophia tells us that when he took a nap in the afternoon he would keep his feet upon her chair lest she might escape and join George William. She herself was most discreet ; she rejoiced heartily when the vacancy of Osnabrück gave herself and her husband an excuse for moving thither, and apparently more heartily still, when George William became enamored of Éléonore d' Olbreuze, the daughter of a rather obscure French marquis. Sophia and Ernest Augustus did everything to throw these two together, invited the d' Olbreuze to Yburg, their charming palace near Osnabrück, and finally promoted a union which was not even a morganatic marriage but merely a contract of fidelity with certain provisions for Éléonore's maintenance. The lady took the name of Madame de Harburg, and in course of time bore to George William the child whom we already know under the name of Sophia Dorothea.

For a number of years things ran on smoothly and Madame de Harburg, by her gentle persistence and her really strong character, managed completely to regenerate her husband and at the same time greatly to better her own position. As her daughter neared a marriageable age her hand was applied for by the son of the Duke

of Wolfenbüttel. In order to render such a union possible an appeal was made to the Emperor, who, grateful for the aid of George William against the French, declared Sophia Dorothea legitimate and worthy to wear the arms of the house of Brunswick. Soon rumors became ripe that an actual wedding was to take place between George William and Éléonore ; the latter was raised to the rank of Countess of Wilhelmsburg, and finally of duchess. George William still meant to keep the promise to his brother as to the succession and constantly affirmed this intention both in private and in public—but whether he would stand fast should a son be born to him was a matter open to grave doubt. There had meanwhile been a readjustment concerning the family estates. The eldest and the third brother had died, the lands were redivided, George William became duke of Celle and Ernest Augustus succeeded to the duchies of Göttingen, Kalenburg and Grubenhagen with the capital of Hanover. The desire for George William's estates had only grown stronger with these changes, for now there was a fair prospect of uniting into one great duchy all the scattered family lands. It may readily be perceived with what feelings the Duchess Sophia regarded the successes of Éléonore d'Olbreuze ; mild, at first, and even flattering had been the judgment passed upon her, but now there are no bounds to the withering contempt which the lady of royal birth feels for the presumptuous parvenu. She is the "duchess of last week," she has false teeth, she would fain have married a valet ; as "that creature" she is referred to in Sophia's letters. And the young Sophia Dorothea, too, comes in for her share of vituperation ; we are told that "her father makes her sleep in his own room since her goings on with young Haxthausen."

With surprise, indignation and disgust, at first, Sophia learned from her husband that he, worried about the future of his children, had given ear to a proposition from the court of Celle for a marriage between Sophia Dorothea and their own eldest prince, George Louis. But the mercenary spirit soon gained the upper hand with the duchess as well as with Ernest Augustus. Although the original terms offered were extremely favorable, the latter haggled for years for an increase of dowry. The following is what Sophia writes to her brother on the subject :

For some time now from Celle they have been offering 50,000 écus in sovereignty and 100,000 down if Ernest Augustus will consent to the marriage of my eldest son with the daughter of George William. The marriage is repugnant to the boy as is the d'Olbreuze connection to us These considerations make it only fair that they should raise the amount. What should you think if they were to give 80,000 a year

to Ernest Augustus ; *ought he to contaminate his ancestors for that ?* They offer besides that the whole army and all the officers in the fortresses shall swear allegiance to Ernest Augustus, and that the whole land shall do him homage and promise to obey only him, even in case George William should have sons. All that won't make it any more agreeable for me to be "brother and boon companion" to a *scoupette*.

Woe to the future of a marriage contracted on such cold-blooded terms ! Sophia Dorothea, aged only sixteen, is handed over to a man so taciturn that his own mother complains bitterly of the impossibility of drawing a word from him, and so cold that his cousin, the Duchess of Orleans, maintained that he could turn everything around him to ice. Yet the poor victim herself, according to a society paper of the day,¹ was handsome, witty, very lively, well read and endowed with much imagination, besides dancing well, singing and playing the harpsichord. Her portraits in the Guelph Museum at Herrenhausen, and in the Radziwill collection in Berlin, show her to have had a pink and white complexion and brilliant black eyes. At the time of her marriage Leibnitz wrote a poem in which he speaks of her "divine beauty." It is possible that she was sometimes indiscreet in her conduct ; indeed at the time of a visit to Italy in 1685 there was much talk about attentions she received from two or three Italian princes ; yet so strong was the tendency to malicious slandering on the part of her proud relatives at Hanover that all stories to her disadvantage must be received with caution.

Count Philip Königsmark first enters upon the scene some six years before the great crisis occurred. He was present at a masked ball given in Hanover in 1688 and was evidently on familiar terms with the highest personages. Ernest Augustus made him colonel in his army, a post which, at the time of his disappearance, he was about to exchange for the office of general in the service of the elector of Saxony, at whose court his sister, the notorious Aurora, was already living. That his attentions to Sophia Dorothea were very marked is attested by an anecdote scrawled by Leibnitz, by way of correction, on the margin of an anonymous pamphlet that appeared at the time on this subject. During an alarm of fire at the opera house Königsmark cried out in great agitation, "Save the electoral princess !" Amid the smoke and confusion he himself seized hold of the Electress of Brandenburg, Sophia Dorothea's cousin, but on finding his mistake most ungallantly left her in the lurch. The electress twitted Sophia Dorothea on Königsmark's devotion, but her remarks were so ill received that a quarrel ensued which was not made up for two years.

¹ The *Mercure Galant*.

Nothing further is known, now, until the time of the catastrophe. On the night of July 1, 1694, Königsmark left his place of lodging and never came back. Ernest Augustus at once caused his apartments to be sealed up and took possession of his papers; all persons who had in any way served as intermediaries between the count and the electoral princess were imprisoned and their letters examined. The existence of some far-reaching intrigue was established beyond a doubt; utterances of ministers at various state conferences that were immediately held prove conclusively that political complications of the gravest sort played a part in the affair. What they were it would be idle now even to attempt to conjecture. So much alone is known, that at this moment Ernest Augustus had many bitter enemies among minor German princes, who were filled with envy and jealousy at his elevation to the rank of an elector; the times were dangerous, for Louis XIV. was at war with the Empire and the Brunswick brothers had done good service against him. It may be that Königsmark was a traitor or a spy; his general bad character, of which there is ample evidence, lends color to the assumption.

Sophia Dorothea's relations with her husband had long been strained; he was notoriously unfaithful to his marriage vow, but, on the other hand, had certain unknown grievances against her which led him shortly before the time of the frustrated flight to threaten her with divorce proceedings. She for her part had fled to her father and had implored him to let her stay with him, a request which George William had refused.

Whatever the mysterious plot may have been in which the flight was to have played a part, the discovery of it was ascribed almost universally by contemporaries to the Countess Platen, mistress of Ernest Augustus. She was believed to have taken summary vengeance upon Königsmark, her motive being variously stated as jealousy of Sophia Dorothea and anger that the count would not marry her own daughter. Sophia Dorothea herself must surely refer to the Countess Platen when she says in one of her rare letters: "I tremble if Count Königsmark is in the hands of the lady whom you know, lest his life may be in danger."

After the seizure of the compromising documents of which Leibnitz said at the time, "they would never have believed her so guilty at Celle if her letters had not been produced," Sophia Dorothea was first relegated to the lonely castle of Ahlden in her father's territory and afterwards, in order to be near the consistory that was to pronounce her divorce, was temporarily removed to Lauenau on Hanoverian ground. At this juncture we come upon

a series of authentic records of the very highest interest; proceedings of the ecclesiastical tribunal appointed to pronounce the divorce, which were discovered in the reign of George IV. among the papers of the descendants of one of the judges; records of ministerial conferences between the courts of Celle and Hanover, as well as private letters of the ministers. *Pour sauver les apparences*, as is repeatedly stated, it was decided to leave Königsmark's name entirely out of the question. The charge against Sophia Dorothea was simply and solely desertion of her husband. Every stage in the trial is known now to have been characterized by incredible deception and duplicity; it seems impossible that the revelations which were dreaded would have referred simply to the princess's relations with the Swedish count. Interviews were frustrated, the counsel for the defense was instructed to fall sick on the day of the trial, while even before the proceedings began the wording of the final verdict had been carefully arranged by the ministers, although some members of the divorce tribunal were not in the secret. Sophia Dorothea, thoroughly humbled and penitent, allowed herself to be instructed as to every response she was to make when questioned by any of the judges. She wrote and signed exactly what she was told to, with the single exception that she could not be brought to declare herself actually guilty of conjugal infidelity. It was a most delicate matter to treat with her, for only on the basis of her guilt could such a divorce be obtained as the court of Hanover wished. Above all things it was desired to prevent her from bringing a counter-charge against her husband, for in that case the tribunal could not have accorded to him and forbidden to her the right of marrying again. On this point the courts of Hanover and Celle came into sharp conflict, but the Hanoverian influence finally prevailed. As the guilty party Sophia Dorothea could not marry again, and—for there was the point at issue—her lands and her riches, save the amount reserved for her support at Ahlden, remained in the hands of the house of Hanover. The end was achieved for which, twelve years before, the obnoxious marriage had been contracted.

How far was she really guilty? To this day she has her advocates and accusers, but to my mind the protocol of her first interview in the matter of the divorce with the ministers of Hanover and Celle offers conclusive evidence that at the time of her entering into the intrigue with Königsmark she was a hunted woman, driven to desperation by a systematic policy of scorn and neglect. The object of the interview, the protocol tells us, was to inform the princess that everything was fully discovered, and that denials and evasions would be of no avail; also to tell her what account of the

affair was to be made public, what she also would have to say publicly, and how she would have to conduct herself as regarded the intended separation. She showed the greatest penitence in the world, in fact thoroughly condemned herself and acknowledged that she had merited everything that had been done to her and more too. She asked for forgiveness and showed great confidence in the generosity of the elector, but seemed to fear the electoral prince. She wished to deny having actually committed crime, acknowledging, however, that the appearances were so against her that nobody could fail to condemn her and that her innocence in this regard could only serve for her own inward satisfaction. She denied also that Königsmark had ever been at night in her chamber. Her faithful lady-in-waiting, Fräulein von Knesebeck, in season and out, even when imprisoned and threatened with torture, made similar assertions, acknowledging an intrigue so dangerous that she had begged her mistress to discharge her and had only been persuaded to remain by her tears and entreaties, but denying stoutly any criminal relations between Sophia Dorothea and Königsmark. The princess was resigned to the separation, the protocol goes on, recognized that it could not well be otherwise and was of the opinion that the scanty friendship, nay more the aversion which the prince had felt for her for several years was the cause of all her misfortunes. She did not think that she could ever again set herself right with him. He had said to her before going to Berlin, "such constraint is unbearable. I shall write to your father and demand a separation." It was not likely that recent events would have changed his mind. The ministers had only to tell her what to do and she would follow their advice. She considered it a fortunate fate that was to withdraw her from a world she had loved too well and give her an opportunity of thinking on God and her salvation. As, heretofore, she had given nourishment to scandal, so in future she hoped to furnish an example of piety.

Plain it is that the coldness and aversion of Prince George, that repugnance to the alliance of which his mother had spoken and in which she so fully shared, that old disdain for everything concerning the d'Olbreuze connection, was the key-note of the whole tragedy. It had driven Sophia Dorothea into courses that, according to the sentiment of the time, needed a long and terrible expiation. It must not be forgotten that the age was one of absolute despotism ; but a year or two before, at this very Hanoverian court, Count Moltke, for aiding a younger son of Ernest Augustus to oppose the latter's law of primogeniture, had been put to death ; a generation later the same punishment was to be meted out to young

Katte, the friend of the future Frederick the Great, for conniving at a flight the consequences of which might have been somewhat similar to those in the case of Sophia Dorothea.

That the unfortunate princess felt chilled to the marrow by her surroundings is attested by her feverish haste, after all was discovered, to leave Hanover for the lonely Ahlden; that no charitable thought moved anyone of the electoral house is shown clearly by the comments in their letters. The Duchess of Orleans, the foster-child, as it were, of the Electress Sophia, calls Sophia Dorothea a "cursed beast," and discourses on the foolishness of women who object to their husbands' mistresses and think they themselves have a right to retaliate in kind. A fortnight after the fatal first of July the electress writes to her niece, discusses some approaching gaieties, declares that the electoral princess will not be there to claim precedence over the Princess of East Friesland and that the electoral prince, who is still in Berlin, diverting himself admirably, unconscious as yet of what has happened, will have to console himself in common with many other heroes.

Unpitied, evidently considered much more guilty than she really was, Sophia Dorothea went into her long exile. She was allowed an income befitting her rank and might even drive out over the Lüneburg Heath if accompanied by a mounted guard. No one obtained access to her presence save by a special order of the governor of the castle; a little heap of the permits that he issued is still to be seen in the Hanoverian archives. Those dear to her save her mother, who visited her at regular intervals, she never saw again. After four years of captivity, on the occasion of the death of Ernest Augustus, she wrote this heart-rending appeal to her former husband:¹

I shall never forgive myself for the displeasure I have caused your electoral Highness; I conjure you to accord me pardon for my past faults—I ask it once more, here on my knees and from my very heart. The regret I feel is poignant and bitter beyond power of expression. The sincerity of my repentance ought to gain for me this boon from your Electoral Highness, and if, as the supreme favor of all, you would allow me to see you and embrace our dear children my gratitude for the granting of such favors would be infinite. Nothing do I desire more ardently; could I but have this satisfaction I should be able to die in peace.

To the Electress Sophia she wrote on the same day imploring her intercession and begging to be allowed to kiss her hands. A third letter in like strain is also extant, written eighteen years later, at the time of George's accession to the throne of England; but no notice was ever taken, so far as we know, of any of these communiques.

¹ Beaucaire, p. 170.

cations. On the contrary, the young George II. was severely reprimanded for having had the portrait of his mother in his room. More than once voices were heard from the English people demanding news of their rightful queen, but no explanation was ever given. When Sophia Dorothea died at Ahlden in 1726, the king permitted no honors whatever to be shown to her body although the citizens of Hanover were anxious to hold a memorial service. No name was placed on her coffin-plate, none among the living wore the least token of mourning for her. "Why did she not die fifty years earlier?" wrote the Duchess of Orleans to her half-sister; "it would have prevented many misfortunes."

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